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Environmental Education Update

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2006



In Brief

In 2005, on-site educational and skills-development opportunities enhanced the experiences of countless schoolchildren, recreationists, and other diverse audiences on public lands. Such offerings ranged from formal classes to day-long education fairs. BLM's standards-based "Hands on the Land" (HOL) sites alone reached 30,000 students; informal, on-site educational programs at events such as National Public Lands Day and the National Scout Jamboree reached additional audiences of approximately 50,000. Among BLM's national priority educational themes in 2005 were energy, fire, and invasive species.

For students and teachers who were unable to take advantage of BLM's on-site resources, distance-learning opportunities and teacher workshops provided formal educational offerings to 10,000 through online "e-field trips," teacher workshops, and other channels. Resource-themed teaching materials, such as printed educator guides and interactive CDs, expanded BLM's formal-education scope even further.

BLM's "Learning Landscapes" environmental education website provided a vast array of resources for use in both classrooms and informal settings. Updated regularly and responsive to new approaches in environmental education, "Learning Landscapes" welcomed more than 404,000 visitors in 2005.

National Programs and Events

National Scout Jamboree, Ft. A.P. Hill, Virginia

BLM hosted 20,000 Boy Scouts over 10 days at a six-station, interactive field exhibit about public lands resources and management issues. BLM also co-hosted a second exhibit to teach "Leave No Trace" outdoor ethics.

Lewis & Clark Bicentennial

BLM's Lewis & Clark Bicentennial interactive traveling exhibit has hosted over 26,000 visitors. From Monticello to the Pacific Ocean, along the Trail and off-site, the public has enjoyed a wide variety of interpretive tours, re-enactments, and countless other fascinating programs. BLM also began planning for a major bicentennial "signature" event to be held just outside Billings, Montana, in summer 2006.

"Hands on the Land" (HOL)

HOL, an interagency network of 40+ field classrooms, includes 18 BLM sites that offer some of the premier formal education programs within the agency. In partnership with local schools, BLM's HOL sites reached more than 30,000 students in 2005 alone.

National Public Lands Day (NPLD)

In 2005, 19 BLM states hosted projects at 102 NPLD sites, assisted by 9,500+ volunteers. Project work provided "teachable moments," and many sites offered special educational opportunities for young volunteers.

Girl Scouts of the USA 50th National Convention

In conjunction with the interagency "Linking Girls to the Land" program, BLM exhibited at the triennial convention, which focused on "transforming Girl Scouts for the 21st century."

Urban Programs: WOW, Urban Tree Houses, Conservation Education Outreach (CEO)

As a partner in the "Wonderful Outdoor World" urban youth outdoor recreation program, BLM provided educational materials, skills/ethics training, and event staff in six states in 2005. At inner-city "Urban Tree Houses" in Washington, DC, and Milwaukee, BLM staff assisted with community-based EE programs. BLM also participates on an interagency CEO team based in Milwaukee.



Campbell Creek Science Center, Alaska



Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area, Nevada



Montrose, Colorado

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Resource Education Highlights: Education focusing on BLM resource programs

Energy Education

- After a pilot program in Alaska, launched BLM's new "Get Energized!" CD/kiosk program and educator's guide, and developed three BLM state-specific "Get Energized!" kiosks.
- Developed a draft teacher module on energy and the public lands in collaboration with the National Energy Education Development (NEED) Project.

Fire Education

- Sponsored 174 Project Learning Tree fire education teacher workshops for 3,461 educators in approximately 30 states.
- With Distance Learning Integrators, hosted a 2005 fire ecology electronic field trip in which more than 7,000 students participated.
- Conducted a fire education workshop for 50 teachers at the 2005 National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) convention.

Biological Resources Education

- Initiated a pilot Girl Scouts wild horse and burro "patch" program.
- Developed a riparian education module in collaboration with the University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension, BLM Riparian Services Team, and USDA Extension Service.
- Conducted an invasive species education workshop for 40 teachers at the 2005 NSTA convention.
- Supported six Student Conservation Association intern teams on "Seeds of Success" projects to collect seeds of native plant populations in California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, and Oregon.

Cultural Resources Education

- Developed a new "Adventures in the Past" heritage resources website in anticipation of the 2006 Antiquities Act centennial; heritage education is a content section. BLM heritage resources websites receive 200,000+ "hits" each year.
- Began developing a Smithsonian Institution photo exhibit on BLM-managed heritage resources. The exhibit will be mounted in 2006.
- Conducted 41 "Project Archaeology" professional development workshops for 557 educators in 15 states. To date, more than 6,000 educators have received Project Archaeology's basic activity guide, *Intrigue of the Past*, through these workshops.
- Launched the third issue of *History Mystery*, "The Ghost Town Mysteries."

Recreation & Outdoor Ethics Education, Interpretation

- Retained a staff of 126 BLM employees as Master Educators of "Leave No Trace" outdoor ethics, and 67 BLM employees as educators of "Tread Lightly!" outdoor ethics.
- Educated 685,000+ public land users about public land stewardship, outdoor ethics, and environmental awareness.
- Piloted a "Traveling Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Visitor Station" to provide on-site outdoor ethics and stewardship education at busy Utah OHV recreation areas and recreation events. Within only a few months, 820 contacts occurred with hunters and OHV recreationists.
- Reached 12 million visitors with interpretive programs and materials, which include interactive presentations, exhibits, and on-site signs.
- Expanded interpretive programs at the National Historic Trails Interpretive Center in Casper, Wyoming, and opened the Escalante Visitor Center in Escalante, Utah, in 2005, the newest of four visitor centers serving the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.

BLM 2005 "Excellence" Award Winners

In their tenth year, BLM's "Excellence in Interpretation or Environmental Education" Awards recognized five outstanding BLM interpreters and educators for employee-conducted programs that enhanced



Wildwood/Cascade Streamwatch, Oregon



San Joaquin River Gorge, California



BLM 2005 "Excellence" Award Winners

understanding of public lands resources and management issues. The 2005 honorees were: Marcia deChadenes, El Camino Real International Heritage Center, New Mexico; Wayne Rice, BLM Heritage Education Program, Colorado; Leah Schrodt, Medford District, Oregon; Jay Thompson, Colorado State Office; and Ervin Cowley, Idaho State Office. The awards were presented in conjunction with the National Association for Interpretation's National Interpreters Workshop in Mobile, Alabama.

In presenting the awards, BLM-Jackson (Mississippi) Field Manager Bruce Dawson noted, "BLM's interpreters and educators play a vital role in introducing . . . visitors to the great outdoors and to the responsibilities we all have to care for our public lands."

State Highlights

36 BLM Field Offices reported having an Environmental Education Coordinator on-staff, with most coordinators serving in a "collateral-duty" capacity. 157 survey respondents reported using partners in educational program delivery, with most partners falling in the categories of educational institutions and non-profit organizations. And 49 programs reported using volunteers as key components of their formal education efforts.

Alaska

Working closely with the Anchorage School District, the Campbell Creek Science Center (CCSC) has developed a variety of programs aligned with the District's science program framework. Programs for K-8th-grade students cover a wide range of topics. Arctic ecosystems, geology, and energy resources are just a few of the many subjects covered in half- and full-day programs for students, many of whom participate in a culminating life-science experience in the 6th grade—the Earth Ranger Academy. Teacher workshops and an avalanche awareness program incorporating math and science skills are also included. More than 5,000 students and teachers have benefited from programs offered at CCSC.

BLM-Juneau's John Rishel Mineral Information Center offers a mineral identification program for grades K-7, as well as "Seaweeek," an outdoor wetlands education program in which the entire local school district participates.

Arizona

Over the course of ten months, Phoenix-area high school science students learn fire science in formal, intensive wildland firefighter training.

Teachers who bring classes to the Betty's Kitchen Watchable Wildlife and Interpretive Area near Yuma receive a guide to familiarize their students with natural and cultural features of the area. Each year, 200 students benefit from such self-directed teacher tours.

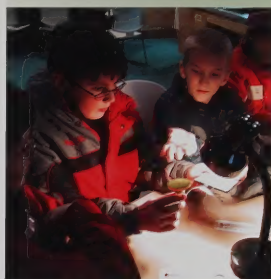
California

Fish Slough's field classrooms serve all 2nd- and 4th-graders in the Bishop school system—about 300 students. Second-graders collect macroinvertebrates and learn about metamorphosis, while 4th-graders focus on botany, ecology, geology, and archaeology. Community volunteers and other partners continue to play an active role in program development and presentations.

Considered the last unprotected large stand of old-growth redwood forest, the 7,400-acre Headwaters Forest Reserve offers a wide variety of education programs, many of which include not only field trips but curriculum packets and in-class presentations by BLM staff. More than 1,300 students have taken part in programs covering such topics as botanical diversity and invasive species, the habitat needs of plants and animals, fungi, stream restoration, and the historic mill town of Falk.

Some 40 miles from Fresno, the San Joaquin River Gorge offers a wide array of education programs. Nearly 5,000 students and teachers have taken part in hands-on studies of Native American culture, aquatic and terrestrial life, energy resources, geology, and the Gold Rush and public lands history of the central Sierra Nevada. Other popular programs focus on map and compass skills and water-quality monitoring.

Located in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, Sand Canyon offers all 700 5th-graders in Ridgecrest the opportunity to learn about desert and riparian ecology, archaeology, and local history. About ten different three-day sessions are held each spring, with community partners playing a major role in providing instruction in the field as well as at pre- and post- sessions in the classroom.



Campbell Creek Science Center, Alaska



Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area, Idaho



Glide Middle School, Oregon

The Santa Rosa Mountains National Monument offers a "Classroom Outreach and Field Trip Program," which highlights local natural and cultural history with field exercises that emphasize measurement and data collection.

At Big Morongo Canyon Preserve, K-12 students spend two days in a "Nature Studies Encounter Class," which combines classroom study and hands-on field study.

Colorado

Part of a Service First HOL site, BLM's Blanca Wetlands comprise more than 200 ponds located in the arid San Luis Valley of southern Colorado. As part of the San Luis Valley environmental education strategy, students from kindergarten through high school take part in increasingly advanced studies of wetland ecology—from scavenger hunts in the early years to data collection and field notes. Teacher workshops are also offered. More than 400 students participate each year.

Located near Canon City, the Garden Park Fossil Area joined Hands on the Land in 2005. Since 1994, volunteers from the Garden Park Paleontology Society have worked with BLM and other partners to provide field trips to the historic quarries at the Garden Park Fossil Area. Five hundred to 2,000 students visit each year. Many enhancements to the curriculum of this already vibrant dinosaur education program are envisioned for the near future.

The Anasazi Heritage Center Museum offers guided educational activities and teacher training workshops focusing on archaeology, cultures, and the human/landscape interface in the Four Corners region.

BLM-Royal Gorge sponsors "Teaching Environmental Education Naturally," a four-day credit class for teachers that highlights hands-on classroom activities.

Eastern States

At Meadowood, located in northern Virginia some 20 miles south of Washington, D.C., 500 acres of open space provide habitat for birds and other wildlife as well as an outdoor classroom for plant and animal monitoring, comparison studies, and water-quality testing. Several thousand students participate in programs at Meadowood each year.

At the Jupiter Inlet Natural Area on Florida's east coast, some 200 high-school students from the Jupiter Environmental Research and Field Studies Academy monitor and inventory recovering prescribed-burn plots as well as constructed tidal lagoons.

The Jackson (Mississippi) Field Office has partnered with Jackson State University and the University of Southern Mississippi to host the Mississippi Science Olympiad, which has reached over 180 students in junior high and high schools throughout the state. The students compete in 23 events involving bio-process lab, physics, chemistry, biology, mechanical engineering, and architectural engineering. Jackson staff also participate in the Piney Woods Camp's week-long environmental camp for high school juniors and seniors, reaching 20 students each year.

Idaho

A volcanic sea on central Idaho's Snake River Plain, Craters of the Moon offers up to 200 students a year an opportunity to learn about the region's fascinating and turbulent geologic history. In addition to field trips focusing on geology, caves, and bats, this new Hands on the Land site, co-managed by BLM and the National Park Service, also provides curriculum guides, rock specimens, and reference materials to local schools.

"WILD About Raptors" is a two-day teacher workshop that focuses on raptor biology and ecology and includes classroom work as well as a field trip to study raptors in the wild, such as those at BLM's Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area.

Courtesy of the BLM-Idaho State Office, a week-long, field-based workshop for secondary-school teachers entitled "Into the Watershed" focuses on measurement and assessment of the health and function of a local watershed.

Montana/Dakotas

With a new interpretive center scheduled to open in 2006, the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument is working with the Fort Benton School District and other partners to link the classroom



Fish Slough, California



Jupiter Inlet, Florida



San Joaquin River Gorge, California

curriculum with outdoor education experiences in history, geology, biology, and other subjects. Field testing of activities and an education trunk called "Journey through the Monument" were top priorities in 2005.

All **Miles City** 3rd-graders attend "Outdoor Education Day," a five-station event about local BLM resources.

At **Pompeys Pillar National Monument**, a varied, curriculum-enhanced program for grades 2-12 benefits approximately 3,000 students per year.

Nevada

The **Nevada Outdoor School** brings together diverse partner groups to foster an understanding of human connections to the natural world. Several thousand students participate in programs focusing on a wide range of topics, including the emigrant experience, ancient Lake Lahontan, biodiversity, and plate tectonics.

Located less than 20 miles from Las Vegas, **Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area** hosts more than 5,000 students each year. The students—mostly in grades K-5—learn about desert and riparian ecosystems and the variety of biological communities inhabiting them. In addition, teacher workshops provide educators with the background needed to lead field trips to Red Rock Canyon. Classroom visits as part of the Mojave Max Education Program provide more area students with an introduction to the desert tortoise and their role in protecting endangered species.

BLM-Ely's week-long Great Basin Teachers Workshop provides statewide information and lesson plans about physical, biological, and cultural environments within the Great Basin.

BLM-Elko's California Trail Gold Rush program offers students historical perspectives.

New Mexico

At the new **El Camino Real International Heritage Center**, teachers and students learn about the historic corridor's 400 years of trade, immigration, and cultural exchange in conjunction with coursework on the history of New Mexico. Since the Center's opening in late 2005, 90 elementary-school students from the towns of Truth or Consequences and Socorro have helped to build gardens, and more than 300 students have taken educational tours.

At **El Malpais National Conservation Area**, students and teachers learn about volcanic badlands and the archaeological background of the area.

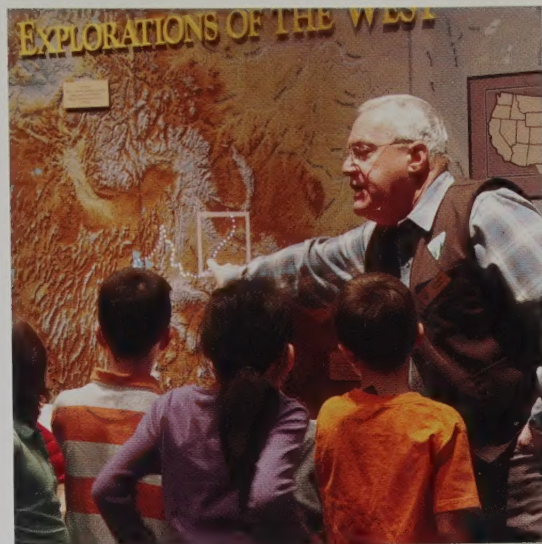
Oregon/Washington

Nearly 300 acres of forested land in the Alder-Jordan Creek watershed serve as a living laboratory for terrestrial and aquatic inventory projects undertaken by students in Douglas County. The **Alder Creek Children's Forest** offers a summer institute to introduce teachers to the educational benefits of involving students in field study, management, and restoration. ACCF is also working with numerous partners to create an online Geographic Information System (GIS) and course management system to receive student data.

Since 1996, BLM, the USDA Forest Service, and 8th-graders from **Glide Middle School** have been working together to collect water quality data at five sites in the Little River Watershed. Hydrologists and GIS specialists train students in the use of monitoring equipment and help teachers develop classroom activities based on the data students gather. About 80 students participate each year.

Located within the city limits of Eugene, the **West Eugene Wetlands** offer educational activities focused on the seasonal wetlands of the Willamette River Valley. The wetlands and nearby upland areas serve as living laboratories for the study of migratory birds, soils, watersheds, plants, food chains, insects, and other topics. Numerous partners are involved in both formal and non-formal programs, including classroom visits, that reached some 1,500 in 2005.

A collaborative effort by BLM, the USDA Forest Service, the non-profit educational organization WolfTree, and other partners is providing more than 2,500 students in the Portland area with the opportunity to study aquatic ecosystems at **Cascade Streamwatch** on the Salmon River. Teams of students investigate the chemical, physical, and biological characteristics of the water, learning lessons in ecological relationships and stewardship.



National Historic Trails Interpretive Center, Wyoming



Campbell Creek Science Center, Alaska



Nine Mile Canyon, Utah



A Word from the BLM Director

KATHLEEN CLARKE —

Public participation in BLM

environmental education programs—particularly by young people—results in better-educated citizens who are eager to assist BLM in addressing complex multiple-use issues on public lands. Citizen stewardship is key to the success of both resource management and conservation undertakings.

Our public lands are true "learning landscapes," providing outstanding formal and informal education opportunities for students, "lifetime learners," and the general public. I think readers will be amazed at the diversity of programs and products outlined in these pages, as well as the sheer numbers of people who have benefited from BLM environmental education efforts. I am grateful to the agency staff, volunteers, and partners who have helped to make BLM a leader in the field of environmental education, and look forward to bringing our programs to ever-expanding audiences.

Kathleen Clarke
Director, Bureau of Land Management

BLM State Audience Totals

Students and Teachers Reached by BLM K-12 Formal Education Programs Annually, by BLM State*	
Alaska (AK)	6,925
Arizona (AZ)	1,540
California (CA)	8,570
Colorado (CO)	18,122
Eastern States (ES)	300
Idaho (ID)	1,695
Montana/Dakotas (MT/DK)	9,000
Nevada (NV)	14,435
New Mexico (NM)	—
Oregon/Washington (OR/WA)	23,905
Utah (UT)	750
Wyoming (WY)	250
Total	85,492

* based on ~200 results received in response to a survey of BLM State and Field Offices

Students and Teachers Reached by BLM K-12 Formal Education Programs Annually, by BLM State and Selected Resource Program* **					
	Energy	Biological Resources ***	Cultural Resources	Fire	Technology
AK	2,900	6,545	2,115	2,955	3,175
AZ	—	1,500	—	40	—
CA	1,950	6,870	7,410	600	2,300
CO	1,790	18,072	17,812	115	417
ES	—	200	100	200	200
ID	320	1,695	—	385	645
MT/DK	—	9,000	3,000	6,000	9,000
NV	5,860	14,435	6,685	5,785	1,800
NM	—	—	—	—	—
OR/WA	640	8,270	15,610	1,200	650
UT	300	550	750	250	250
WY	—	250	110	60	—
Total	13,760	67,387	53,592	17,590	18,437

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** many education programs addressed more than one resource; audiences are counted for each resource

*** includes plants, fish, wildlife, wild horses/burros, weeds, riparian resources, water, and soils



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Students and teachers in the **Burns District** benefit from a comprehensive classroom weeds curriculum tied to national science standards; many activities integrate social studies, art, and other disciplines.

In **Salem**, Project Archaeology provides middle-school teachers with resources for their classrooms.

Vale hosts a multi-year watershed rehabilitation project for which students monitor conditions and plant vegetation.

Utah

Around the state, "Intrigue of the Past" in-service teacher workshops, taught by teams of educators and archaeologists, guide participants through the fundamental concepts of archaeology, Utah's prehistoric Native American heritage, and the complex ethical issues involved in scientific research and site preservation.

At **Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument**, four visitor centers host over 1,000 students each year for programs that focus on paleontology, archaeology, and geology.

At the **Cleveland-Lloyd Dinosaur Quarry**, grade-appropriate educational tours were given to more than 350 students; activity books are available for 4th-graders.

Wyoming

The **National Historic Trails Interpretive Center** hosts thousands of visitors, including school groups, each year. More than 100 students, mostly in grades 3-5, participate in programs that focus on both cultural and natural history, including Native American studies, emigrant and trail history, geology, ecology, and biology. Students have planted trees and are using newly acquired Global Positioning System skills to monitor vegetation at the nearby **Bessemer Bend Interpretive Site**, located along the North Platte River.

At the **Red Gulch Dinosaur Tracksite** each year, 200-240 students from three nearby towns and a local community college learn about paleontological research being done in their area.

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Leave No Trace; Tread Lightly!

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BLM Teaching Materials

BLM teaching resources are available online at the BLM "Learning Landscapes" (<http://www.blm.gov/education>) and "Adventures in the Past" (<http://www.blm.gov/heritage/adventures>) websites, and the "Hands on the Land" website (<http://www.handsontheland.org>). Printed materials may also be requested from the BLM Environmental Education & Volunteers Group, 1849 C Street, NW, LS-406, Washington, DC 20240, (202) 452-5078.

Cover Photo: Wildwood/Cascade Streamwatch, Oregon

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